A Divine MESSAGE.

A Dreadful Warning

To all Impenitent Sinners.

Shewing the great Danger of making Light of Christ and Salvation, tendered in the Gospel.

Gathered from the Labours of that Reverend Devine, Mr. *Richard Baxter*, by *I. C.* B.D.

Heb. 2. 3. *How shall we escape if we neglect so great Salvation?*

Licensed and Entered according to Order.

CHRIST,

The Pearl of Great price:

Or the Excellency of

Christ to Believers

SET FORTH.

Being a Divine Message from God,
TO POOR SINNERS.

1. Wherein Jesus Christ and Salvation are freely offered, to all that will come in and accept of it, before the Day of Grace is past.
2. The great danger of slighting of Christ, and Salvation, tendered in the Gospel.
3. With sweet invitations to all poor Sinners to close with Jesus Christ, and be happy for ever.

Mat. 13. 45, 46. *The Kingdom of Heaven is like unto a Merchant-Man, seeking goodly Pearls, who when he had found one Pearl of great price, he went and sold all that he had, and bought it.*

London, Printed for *Iosh. Conyers*, at the *Black-Raven* in *Duck-Lane*, 1677.

Books Printed for *Joshua Conyers*, at the *Black-Raven* in *Duck-Lane*.

1. The Fiery Tryals of several of the Martyrs, and Confessors, that suffered for the Protestant Religion in Queen *Maries* days, newly Printed.
2. The Young-man's Guide in his way to Heaven.
3. An Awaking Call to Unconverted Sinners, or the Jaylors Conversion.
4. Lately Printed, The Travels, cruel Persecution, and Martierdom, of the 12. Apostles; Historically set forth, By *I. C.*
5. A Broad-side against the great Sin of Pride, set forth in its lively Colours.
6. The Art of Thriving, or the way to get and keep Money, in these hard and miserable times.
7. Ready to be published, that Excellent Piece, the Art of Divine Contentment in all Conditions, by *I. C.*
8. *Culpepper's* faithful Physician, Teaching every Man and Woman to be their own Doctor.
9. Every Man's Companion, or every Man his own Lawyer. *All sold at 2 pence a piece.*

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The

Matth. 22. 2, 3, 4, 5. verſes.

The Kingdom of Heaven is like unto a certai
King, which made a Marriage for his Son
and ſent forth his ſervants to call them tha
are bidden to the wedding, and they woul
not come.

Again he ſent forth other ſervants, ſaying; T
them which are bidden, behold I have p
pared my dinner; my Oxen and my fatlin
are killed, and all things are ready: come u
to the marriage. But they made light of
and went their ways, one to his Farm, a
ther to his Merchandiſe.

The bleſſed Son of God, that thou
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but would himſelf alſo be
Preacher of Grace and Salvati
doth compriſe in this Parable the ſumm
his Goſpel: by the King that is here ſaid
make the Marriage, is meant God the Fath

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hat sent his Son into the world to cleanse
hem from their sins, and espouse them to
imself by his Son: for whom the marriage
s made, is meant the Lord Jesus, the Eter-
al Son of God, who took to his God-head
he nature of man, that he might be capable
f being their Redeemer, when they had lost
hemselves in sin: by the Marriage is meant
he conjunction of Christ to the souls of sin-
ers, when he giveth up himself to them, to
e their saviour, and they give up them-
lves to him as his redeemed ones, to be
wed and ruled by him: the perfection of
hich Marriage will be at the day of judge-
ent, when the conjunction between the
ole Church and Christ shall be solemnized.
he world, here in this Parable is invited
the Gospel to come in & partake of Christ
alvation, which comprehendeth both par-
, justification, and right to salvation,
all other priviledges of the Members of
ist. The Invitation is Gods Offer of
ist and salvation in the Gospel, the ser-
ts that invite them are the Preachers
he Gospel, who are sent forth for that
, the preparation for the feast there men-
ed, is the sacrifice of Jesus Christ, & open-
a way for revolting sinners to return
God. The first persons invited, are the

Jews;

Jews; upon their obstinate refusal they are sentenced for punishment, and the Gentiles are invited; not only invited, but by the powerful preaching, and miracles, and effectual grace, intreated and prevailed with to come in; but they made light of it: From which words we shall ground our whole discourse in these words, containing an account of the ill entertainment that the Gospel findeth with many to whom it is sent, even after a first and second invitation, they make light of it, & are taken up with other things; tho the Jews were first guilty of it, yet too many of us Gentiles are like them at this Day. The sum of these words we shall compute in this doctrine. For all the wonderful Love and mercy that God hath manifested in giving his Son to be the Redeemer of the World, and which the Son hath manifested in redeeming them by his blood, for all his full preparation, by being a sufficient Sacrifice for the sins of all; for all his personal excellencies, and that full and glorious Salvation that he hath procured, and for all his free offers of these, and frequent and earnest invitations of Sinners, yet many make light of all this, and preferre the Worldly enjoyments before it; The Ordinary Entertainment of all is by contempt: Not that all do so that were alike Guilty of it, for God hath Chosen

whom he will compel to come in, but till the spirit of grace over-power the dead & obstinate hearts of men, they hear the Gospel as a common Story, and the great matters contained in it, go not to the heart.

1. I shall shew what it is that men make light of: The thing that carnal hearers make light of, is, First the Doctrine of the Gospel it self, which they hear regardlesly. Secondly, the benefits offered them therein are Christ himself: concerning Christ himself, the Gospel declareth his person and nature, and the great things he hath done and suffered for man; his redeeming him from the wrath of God by his blood, and procuring a grant of Salvation with himself. Furthermore, the same Gospel maketh an offer of Christ to sinners, that if they will accept of him on easie and reasonable terms, he will be their Saviour, the Physitian of their souls, their Husband and Head.

2. The benefits that he offereth them are these; 1. That with these blessed Relations to him, and interest in him, they shall have the pardon of all their sins past, and saved from Gods wrath to come, so that they obey sincerely, and turn not again to the Rebellion of their unregeneracy.

2. They

3. They shall have the Spirit to become their guide and sanctifier, and to dwell in their Souls, and to help them against their Enemies. And bring them back to God.

4. They shall have right to everlasting Glory when this life is ended, besides many more excellent Privileges, with the foretaste of what they shall enjoy hereafter. All these benefits the Gospel offereth to them that will have Christ on reasonable terms. The sum of all is in 1 Joh. 5.11,12. This is the Record, that God hath given eternal life, and this life is in his Son, he that hath the Son hath life, and he that hath not the Son hath not life. In the next place I shall shew what this making light of the Gospel is.

1. It is in not taking heed to what is spoken, as though it was not a matter of truth or a thing that little concerned them: when the gospel doth not effect them, or go to their hearts: yet men are not awakened by it from their security; when we tell men what Christ hath done and suffered for their Souls, and it scarce moveth them: our words take up in the porch of their ears and fancies, but will not enter into their inward parts, as if we were speaking to men that had no hearts or feeling. This is making light of Christ, Ac-

28. Hearing ye shall hear, and not unde-

stan-

stand seeing ye shall see, and not perceive, for the heart of this people are waxen gross, and their ears are dull of hearing, their eyes are closed up.

3. The main cause of mens slighting of Christ and salvation, is a secret root of unbelief in mens hearts. Whatsoever they pretend, they do not soundly and thoroughly believe the word of God. They are taught to say the gospel is true, but they never saw the evidence of its truth, so far as throughly to perswade them of it, nor have they got their souls settled on the infallibility of Gods testimony, nor considered of the truth of the particular Doctrines revealed in the Scripture, so far as soundly to believe them. Oh did you all soundly believe the words of this gospel, of the evil of sin, of the need of Christ, and what he hath done for you, and what you must be, and do, if ever you will be saved by him, and what will become of you for ever, if you do not; I dare say it would cure the contempt of Christ, and you would not make so light of the matters of your salvation. But men do not believe while they say they do, and would face us down that they do, and verily think they do themselves. There is a root of bitterness, and an evil heart of unbelief, that makes them depart from the living God, Heb. 2. 12. The heart is

hard

hard naturally, by custom of sinning made more hard, by long abuse of mercy, neglect of the means of grace, and resisting of the spirit of God. Hence it is, that men are turned into Stones, and till God cure them of the stone of the heart, no wonder they feel not what they know, or regard what is preached to them, but make light of all, when mens hearts are like the high-way, that is troden to hardness by long custom of sinning, or like the clay that is hardned into a stone by the heat of those mercies that should have melted them into repentance. When their consciences are seared with a hot Iron, as the Apostle speaks in the 2 of Tim. 4. 2. No wonder then if they be past feeling, and work all uncleanness with greedinesse, do make light of Christ & everlasting glory. Oh that it was not the case of too many hearers of the Gospel at this day. Oh had we living souls to speak to, they would hear and feel, and not make light of what we say. I know that they are naturally alive, but spiritually dead, as the Scripture witnesseth in Ephe. 2. 3. Oh, if there were but one spark of the life of grace in them, the Doctrine of salvation by Jesus Christ would appear to them the weightiest matters in the World. In a word, men of a worldly disposition do judge all things according

cording to worldly advantages, therefo
Chriſt is ſlighted, Iſa. 53, 3. He is deſpiſe
and rejected of men, they hide their faces fro
him, and eſteemed him not, as ſeeing no beau
ty or comlineſs in him, that they ſhould deſi
him.

4. Chriſt and Salvation are made light o
becauſe men were never ſenſible of their ſi
and miſery, and extream neceſſity of Chriſt
Salvation: Their eyes were never open t
ſee themſelves as they are, nor their heart
ſoundly humbled in the ſence of their cond
tion; if this were done, they would ſoon b
brought to value a Saviour. A truly broke
heart can no more make light of Chriſt an
Salvation, than a hungry man of his food
or a ſick man of the means that would giv
him eaſe. Till then our words cannot hav
acceſs to their hearts; while ſin and miſer
is made light off, Chriſt and Salvation will b
made light off, but when theſe are perceive
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they would give a world for a Chriſt; the
they muſt have Chriſt or elſe they dye. Al

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things then are dross and dung in comparison of the excellent knowledge of Christ, Phil. 3. When once they are awakened by Gods judgements, as the poor Jaylor, Act. 16.29. Then they cry out, what shall we do to be saved? This is the reason why God will bring men so low by humiliation, to bring them to salvation. Humble thy self under the mighty hand of God, and he will exalt thee in his due time.

5. Christ and Salvation are made light of, upon presumption that he is theirs already, and that God is so merciful, and Christ that suffered so much for them, is surely resolved to save them, or else it may be obtained at any time, if it be not yet so. It is true, grace is free, and the offer universal, according to the extent of the preaching of the Gospel: but he that hath promised thee Christ, if thou be willing on his terms, hath not promised to make thee willing, if thou art not willing now, how dost thou think to be willing hereafter? if thou canst make thine heart willing, why is it not done now? can you do it better when sin hath more hardned it? and God may have given thee over to thy self; if it be so easie a matter indeed as you imagine for a sinner to believe, and repent at any time, how comes it to pass that it's done by so few

but most of the world doth perish in their impenitency, when they have all the help & means that we can afford them, it is the easiest thing, and sweetest life in the world, to a gracious soul to live in the love of God, and the delightful thoughts of the life to come, where all their hope and happiness lyeth: but to the worldly carnal heart, it is as easie to remove a Mountain, as to bring them to this, however these men are their own condemners, for if they think it so easie a mater to repent and believe, and so to have Christ and right to salvation, then have they no excuse for neglecting this that they thought so easie.

O wretched and impenitent souls, what mean you to say, when God shall ask you, why you did not repent & believe, & love your Redeemer above the world, when you thought it so easie that you could do it at any time.

We shall now come to the Application.

Use 1. Hence we may be informed of the blindness and folly of all carnal men, how contemptable are their judgments that think Christ and Salvation of little worth, what reason is there that any should be discouraged by them, or their scorns, or contradictions. It is one of the wonders of the world, that when God hath so loved the world as to send

his

his son, and Christ hath made a sure satisfaction by his death sufficient for them all, & offered the benefits of it so freely to them, even without money or price, that yet the most of the world should perish: yea, the most of those that are thus called by his word: why? here is the reason, when Christ hath done all this, men make light of it: God hath shewed them that he is not unwilling, and Christ hath shewed that he is not unwilling that men should be restored to Gods favour, and be saved: but men are actually unwilling themselves. God taketh no pleasure in the death of sinners, but rather that they turn and live, Ezek. 33. 11. but men take such pleasure in sin, that they will die before they will return. It is a most lamentable thing to see how most men do spend their care and time, and their pains for known Vanities, while God and Glory are laid aside: That he that is all, should seem to them as nothing; and that which is nothing, should seem to them as good as all; that God should set mankind in such a Race, when Heaven or Hell is their certain end, and that they should sit down and loyter, and run after the childish toyes of the world, and so much forget the prize that they should run for. Oh poor distracted

stracted world, what is it you run after, and neglect? If God had never told what you were sent into the world to do? or whether they were going? or what was before them in another world? then they had been excusable; but he hath told them till they are a weary of hearing of it, and yet men make light of it.

Again, that which we most highly value, we cannot buy too dear: Christ and salvation are freely given, yet most men go without them, because they cannot enjoy the world and them together; they are called but to part with that which would hinder them from Christ, and they will not do it; they are called to give God his own, and to resine all to his will, and let go the profits and pleasures of this world, when they must let go either Christ or them, and they will not; they think this too dear a bargain; they say they must look to their estates and credit, and pleasures, and profit, whilst Christ and salvation are neglected. Christ hath told us over and over, that if we will not forsake all for him, we cannot be his Disciples, Mat. 10. How will these dispisers of Christ and salvation be able one day to look him in the face, and give an account of their neglects; How will you escape if you neglect such

so great Salvation. Thus much I have spoken by way of conviction: do not some of your Consciences by this time smite you, and say, I am the man that have made light of my salvation: if they do not, it is because you make light of it still, for all that is said to you. I would fain have this damning sin cured; consider I beseech you, first thou makest light of him, that did not make light of thee who did deserve it; as a man, thou art but a worm to God, as a sinner, thou art far viler then a Toad; yet Christ was so far from making light of thee and thy happiness, that he came down into the flesh, and lived a life of suffering, and offered himself a sacrifice to the Justice that thou hadst provoked, that thy miserable soul might have a remedy, and yet shall we slight him for all his love to us.

2. Consider the work of mans Salvation by Jesus Christ, is the Master-piece of all the works of God, wherein he would have his Love and Mercy to be magnified; how great was the evil and misery that he delivered us from, the good procured for us, all are wonders from his Birth to his Ascension: from our new Birth, to our Glorification all are wonders of matchless mercy; and yet do you make light of them: you make light of

matters of the greatest excellency and concernment in the world, you know not what it is you slight, had you well known, you would not have done it, as Christ said to the woman of Samaria, Joh. 4. 1 Cor. 2. 8. so had you truly known what Christ hath done and suffered for you, you would not have made light of him: had you been one day in Heaven, and but seen what they possess, and seen also what miserable Souls must endure that are shut out, you would never sure make so light of Christ again. Oh Sirs, it is no trifle or jesting matter that the gospel speaks of. Oh Lord, that men did but know what everlasting Glory, & everlasting Torments are, would they then here as they do? I wonder that such thoughts break not your sleep, and that they come not in your mind when you are about your Labour; how can you have any quietness in your minds? how can you eat, or drink, or rest, till you have got some ground of everlasting consolation: is that a Man or a Corps, that is not concerned with matters of so great moment: that can be readier to sleep than to tremble, when he hears he must stand at the Bar of God.

3. Who is it that sends this weighty message to you? is it not God himself? shall the God of Heaven speak, & then make light

of it? you would not slight the voice of an Angel or a Prince, consider whose salvation it is you make slight of, is it not your own? are you no more near or dear to your selves, then to make light of your own happiness or misery? why Sirs, do not you care whither you be saved or damned? is self-love lost? are you turned your own enemies, Prov. 1. 36. All they that hate me, love Death.

4. Consider the time is near when Christ and Salvation will not be made slight of, as now they are, when God hath shaken these careless souls out of their Bodies, and you must answer for all your Sins in your own name; O then, what would you give for a Saviour? when a thousand Bills shall be brought against you, & none to relieve you, then you will consider, that Christ would now have stood between me and the wrath of God, had I not despised him, he would have answered all. When you see the world hath left you, and your companions in Sin have deceived themselves and you, and all your merry days are gone, then what would you give for that Christ and Salvation that now you account not worth your labour; do you think when you see the judgment set, & you are doomed to everlasting Perdition for your wickedness, that you should make as

of Chriſt as now; will then be worth te
thouſand worlds, and is he not now wort
the higheſt eſteemation and deareſt affecti
on: ſo much for the hainouſneſs of this Sin
of making light of Chriſt. I now come t
know your reſolution for the time to come
do you mean to ſet as light by Chriſt an
Salvation as hitherto, and to be the ſam
men after all this, I hope not, Oh, let no
your Miniſter that would fain help to ſav
you, be brought in as a witneſs againſt you
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what Chriſt did for their ſouls, and wha
need they had of him, we muſt needs ſpea
the truth: yea Lord, we told them as plai
ly as we could, but they gave us the hear
ing, and made light of all that we ſaid t
them: oh how ſad will it prove on your ſide
if you force them to ſuch an anſwer as this?
Will you for the time to come Repent, an
Believe, and make conſcience of your duty
& earneſtly pray to God, that you may hav
a part in Chriſt and Salvation? go not ou
of doors till you have breathed out theſe de
ſires of God; do not lye down to reſt, till yo
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God knoweth my neceſſities, without you
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have you to know them and feel them, and exercise your desires, and all the graces of his Holy Spirit in these duties: It is he that hath commanded us to Pray continually; though he knoweth your needs without, 1 Thes. 5. 17. Christ himself spent whole Nights in Prayer, and encourageth us to this course, Luk. 18. 1.

2dly. Will you for the time to come resolvedly cast away your known Sins, at the command of Christ? If you have been proud, or contentious, or malicious, or revengeful, be so no more: if you have been adulterers, or swearers, or cursers, be so no more: you cannot hold these, and yet set by Christ and Salvation: what say you, are you resolved to let them go? if not, when you know it is the Will of Christ, and he hath told you such shall not enter into his Kingdom, do not you make light of him.

3ly. Will you for the time to come serve God in the dearest, as well as the cheapest part of his service, not onely with your tongues, but with your purses, & your deeds? shall the poor find you set more by Christ than the world? pure Religion, and undefiled before God, is this. To visit the Fatherless and the Widdows in their afflictions, 1 *Iam.* and the last Verse. Will you resolve to stick

to Christ, and make sure this work of salvation, though it cost you all you have in this world: if you think these terms too dear, you make light of Christ, and will be judged accordingly.

4thly. Will you for the future make much of all things that tend to your salvation, and take every help that God offereth you, and gladly make use of all his Ordinances: attend upon the strengthning Sacraments, spend the Lords day in these Holy imployments, instruct your Children and servants in these things, Deut. 6. 6, 7. Get into good company that set their Faces Heavenwards, and that will teach you the way, and help you thither: and take heed of the company of wicked scorners, or foolish, voluptuous, fleshly men, or any that would hinder you in this work. Will you do these things, or will you shew that you are slighters of it by neglect of them?

Will you take it for your highest honour that you may be Christs Disciples, and may be admitted to serve and worship him, and rejoyce with holy confidence in the sufficiency of that sacrifice by which you may have pardon of all your sinnings, and right to the inheritance of the saints in light? if you do such things sincerely, you will shew that you

set

set by Christ and salvation, or else not.

Lastly, Sirs, I have now done the work which I have been upon, what effect it hath or will have upon your hearts, I know not, nor is it in my power to accomplish that which my soul desireth for you: were it the Lords will that I might have my wish herein, that these words which you have heard read unto you, should so stick by you, that the secure should be awakened by them, and that none might perish by the slighting of their salvation. Oh that I could make every mans conscience a Preacher to himself; that it might do it, which is ever with you, that the next time thou goest Prayerless to bed, or about your business, conscience might cry out, dost thou set no more by Christ and thy salvation? The next time thou art ready to rush upon known sins, and to please your fleshly desires against the command of God, conscience might cry out, is Christ and salvation of no more worth, then to cast them away, or venter them for thy lusts: that when you are next spending the Lords day in idleness, or vain sports, conscience might tel you what you are a doing. In a word, that in all your neglects of duty, your sticking at the supposed labour or cost of holy life: yea in all your cold and lasie Prayers and performances,

ances, conscience might tell you how unsuitable such endeavours are to the reward, and that Christ and salvation should not be so slighted, it is a thousand pities, that when God hath provided a saviour for the world, and when Christ hath suffered so much for their sins, and made so full a satisfaction to divine Justice, and purchased so Glorious a Kingdom for his saints, and all this is offered so freely to sinners, to lost and unworthy sinners, even for nothing, that yet so many millions should everlastingly perish, because they make light of their saviour and salvation, and prefer the vain world, and their lust before them. Thus I have delivered my Message; the Lord open your hearts to receive it. I have perswaded you with the words of truth and soberness: the Lord perswade you more effectually, or else all is lost. Let us hear the conclusion of the whole matter: Fear God, and keep his commandments: for this is the whole duty of men.

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31. MAY 1965

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